DC ENTERTAINMENT™

BEYOND THE FRINGE™

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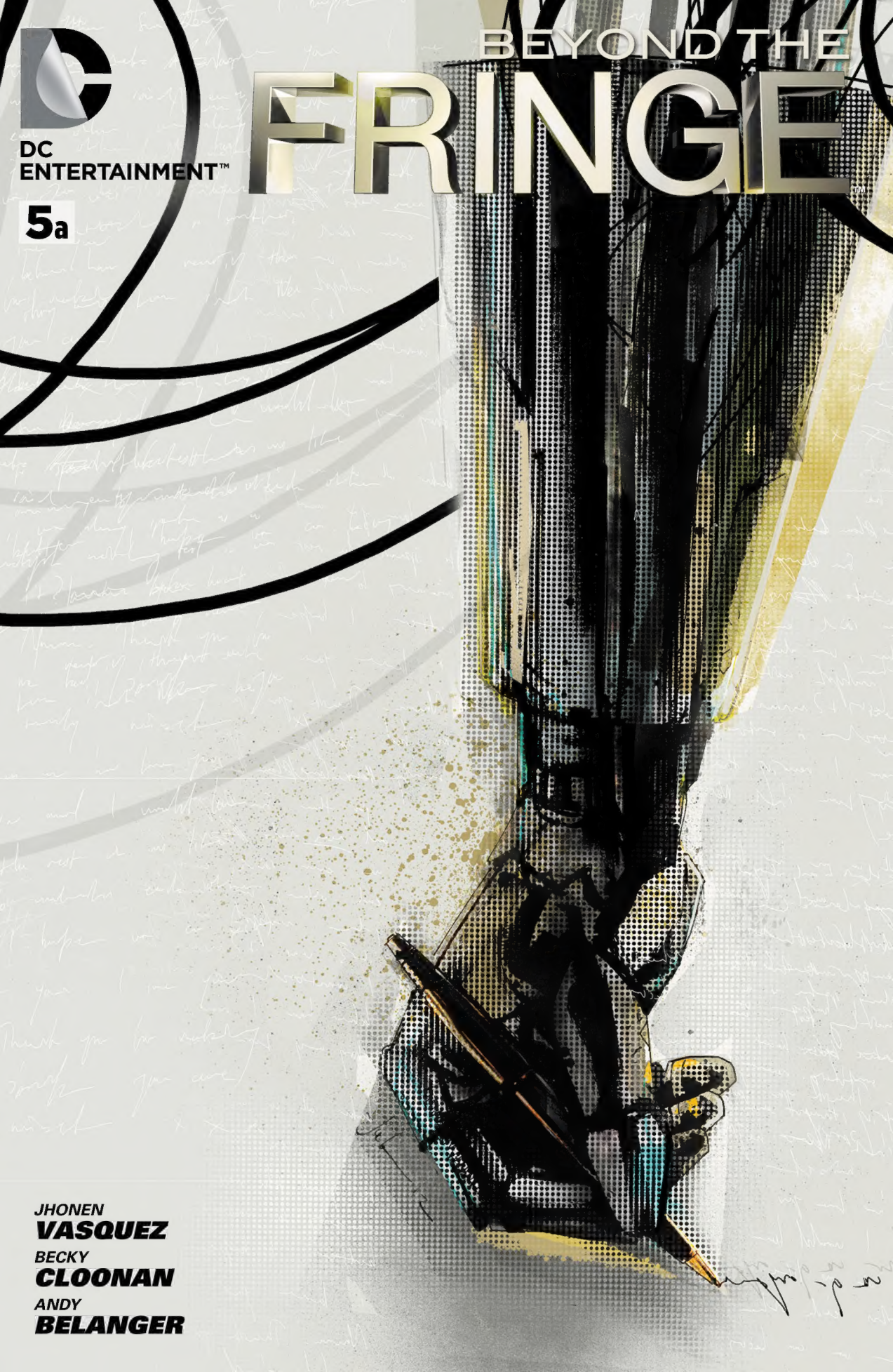

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BEYOND THE FRINGE™

Ghost Writer Part I

Chapter 5A

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FRINGE
SCRIT SCRIT SCRIT SCRIT
Shaw

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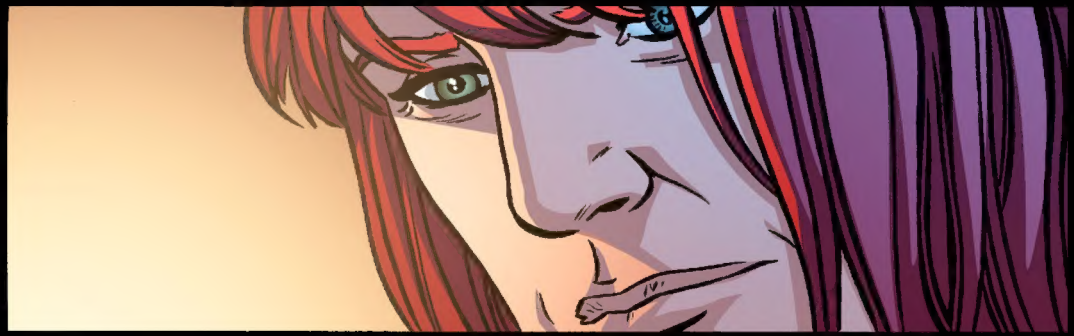
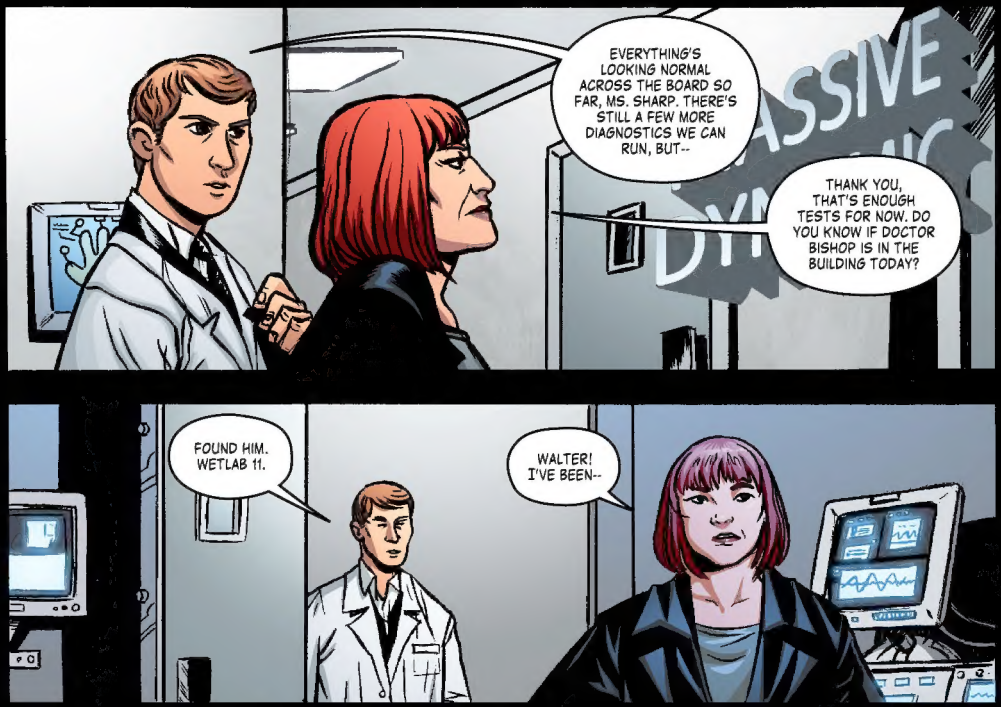
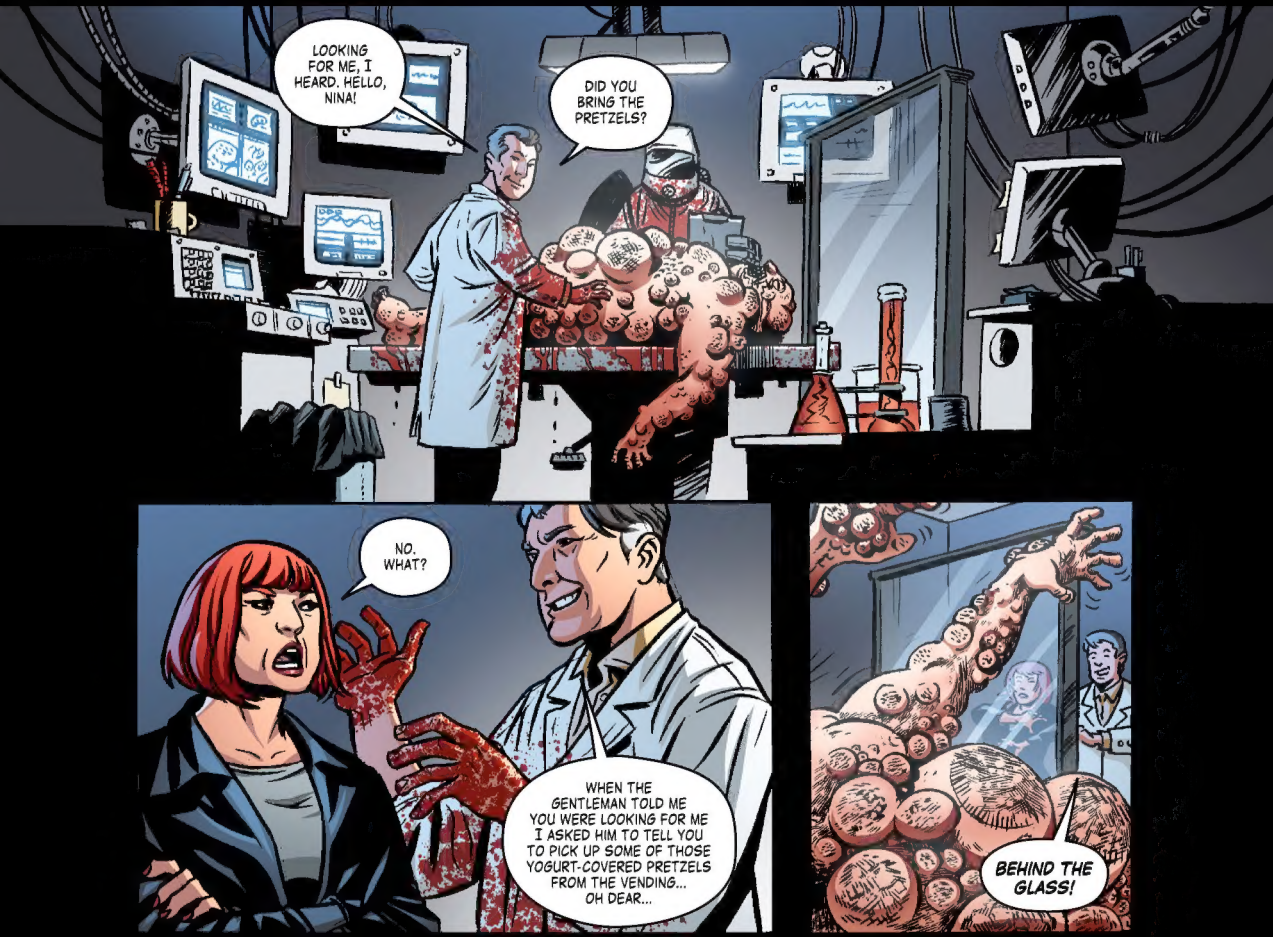


The nut
Plays with
Ghosts?

GHOST WRITER
I SEE...


EVERYTHING'S LOOKING NORMAL ACROSS THE BOARD SO FAR, MS. SHARP. THERE'S STILL A FEW MORE DIAGNOSTICS WE CAN RUN, BUT--
THANK YOU, THAT'S ENOUGH TESTS FOR NOW. DO YOU KNOW IF DOCTOR BISHOP IS IN THE BUILDING TODAY?
FOUND HIM. WETLAB 11.
WALTER! I'VE BEEN--


LOOKING FOR ME, I HEARD. HELLO, NINA!
DID YOU BRING THE PRETZELS?
NO. WHAT?
WHEN THE GENTLEMAN TOLD ME YOU WERE LOOKING FOR ME I ASKED HIM TO TELL YOU TO PICK UP SOME OF THOSE YOGURT-COVERED PRETZELS FROM THE VENDING... OH DEAR...
BEHIND THE GLASS!

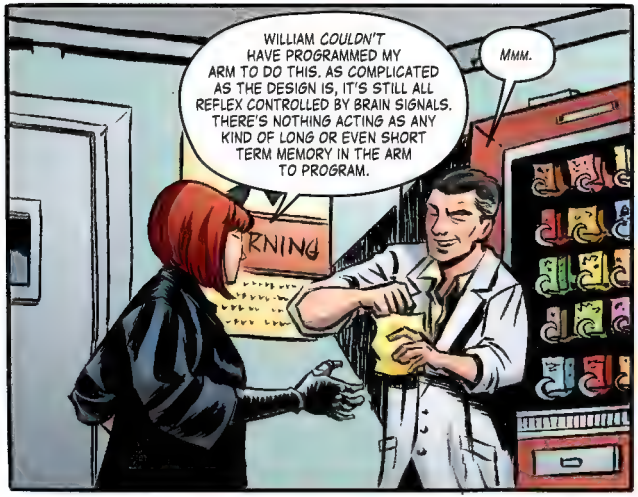
KERBOOM

I KNEW IT! HAH!
MY OFFICE?
OH? OH, YES! LET ME JUST HOSE OFF STEWBERT FIRST.
STEWART...
IT'S BEEN ACTING STRANGELY, WHICH IS WEIRD IN AND OF ITSELF AS I'VE NEVER HAD ANY TROUBLE WITH IT, BUT TODAY I WOKE UP AND CAUGHT IT WRITING THAT.

ACTING STRANGELY HOW?
TWITCHES HERE, ODD TWINGES THERE. TAPPING SOMETIMES, AND NOW THE WRITING.
THAT'S WONDERFUL! EH...SPOOKY, BUT WONDERFUL.
I WEAR THESE GLOVES, EVEN IN BED. THE THING'S WATERPROOF, SO I NEVER REALLY HAVE TO TAKE IT OFF, EVEN IN THE SHOWER. I CAN MOSTLY FORGET IT'S NOT *MINE*.
IT JUST WORKS LIKE IT SHOULD SO IT HELPS ME TO NOT THINK ABOUT IT. AS WONDERFUL AS YOU THINK IT IS, IT'S WHAT I HAVE, AND I NEED TO BE ABLE TO RELY ON IT.

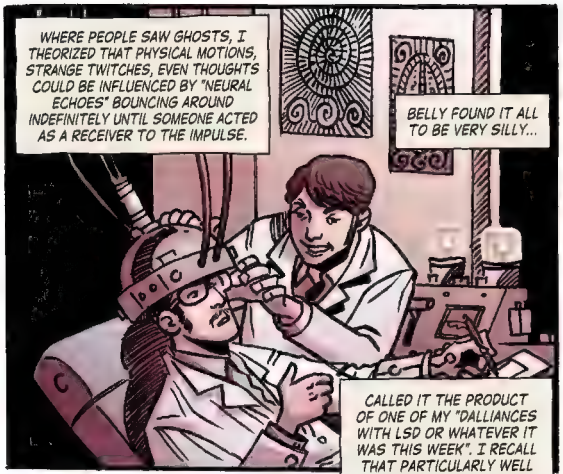
BELLY.
WILLIAM?
YES, WILLIAM. I THINK I KNOW WHAT THE NOTE MEANS.
COME WITH ME. THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED!

WRRRRRRRRRRRRR...
THE GOLDEN PRETZEL
COOL GUY RAISINS
CHOCO-HOY!
ZAGNUGGET


WILLIAM COULDN'T HAVE PROGRAMMED MY ARM TO DO THIS. AS COMPLICATED AS THE DESIGN IS, IT'S STILL ALL REFLEX CONTROLLED BY BRAIN SIGNALS. THERE'S NOTHING ACTING AS ANY KIND OF LONG OR EVEN SHORT TERM MEMORY IN THE ARM TO PROGRAM.
MMM.

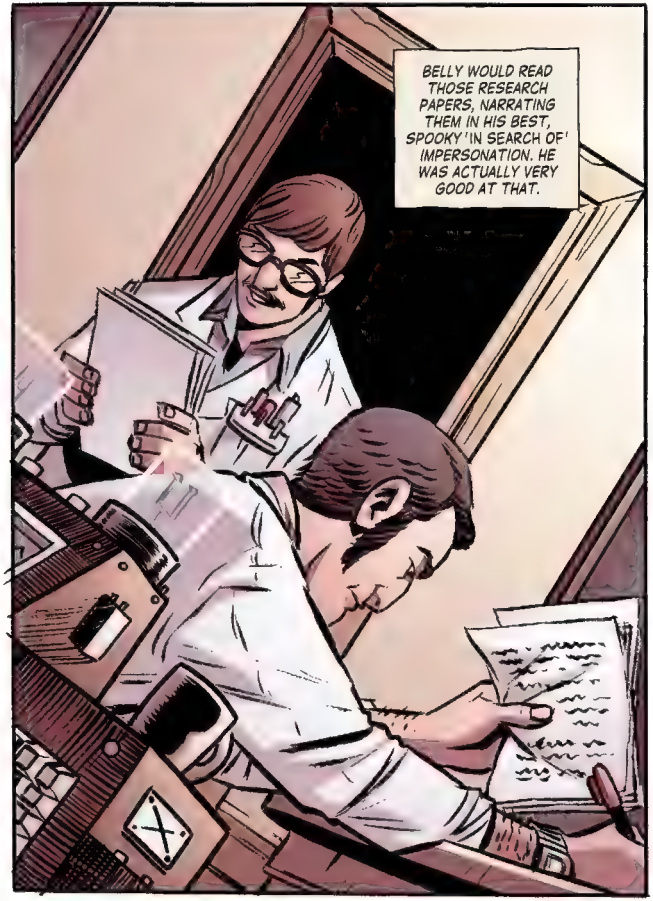
BE THAT AS IT MAY, THE PROOF IS IN THE NOTE.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN, WALTER?
THE GOLDEN
WHOA PRETZELS
IN THE '70s, I HAD DEVELOPED A FASCINATION WITH THE SUPERNATURAL, WITH A PARTICULAR INTEREST IN PHANTOM GESTURES AND AUTOMATIC WRITING.


WHERE PEOPLE SAW GHOSTS, I THEORIZED THAT PHYSICAL MOTIONS, STRANGE TWITCHES, EVEN THOUGHTS COULD BE INFLUENCED BY "NEURAL ECHOES" BOUNCING AROUND INDEFINITELY UNTIL SOMEONE ACTED AS A RECEIVER TO THE IMPULSE.
BELLY FOUND IT ALL TO BE VERY SILLY...
CALLED IT THE PRODUCT OF ONE OF MY "DALLIANCES WITH LSD OR WHATEVER IT WAS THIS WEEK". I RECALL THAT PARTICULARLY WELL BECAUSE OF HOW SMUGLY THE LIGHTS FROM HIS MOUTH FLARED AS HE SAID IT.

MY "GHOSTS", I BELIEVED, WERE IN FACT THE PRODUCT OF SOURCES THAT WERE VERY MUCH ALIVE, HUMAN BEINGS ACTING AS TRANSMITTERS-- THEIR THOUGHTS, THEIR IMPULSES ESCAPING THEIR BODIES AND ACTUALLY BEING SENT OUT INTO THE WORLD.
COME IN, LINDBERGH BABY. COME IN.

WORKABLE RESULTS WERE HARD TO COME BY, BUT THEN I BEGAN WORKING WITH TWINS, AND THE SUCCESS THERE MADE ME THINK IT WAS ABOUT THE COMPATIBILITY, A PREDISPOSED TRANSMITTER/RECEIVER RELATIONSHIP.
WHO BETTER TO ACT AS BOTH THAN THE INDIVIDUAL THEMSELVES? IMAGINE ME, MY ARM, HOURS, DAYS, OR EVEN YEARS LATER, ACTING OUT THE PROCESS OF EATING THIS PRETZEL!
AN ECHO.
AN ECHO!


BELLY WOULD READ THOSE RESEARCH PAPERS, NARRATING THEM IN HIS BEST, SPOOKY 'IN SEARCH OF' IMPERSONATION. HE WAS ACTUALLY VERY GOOD AT THAT.

BUT THE MORE HE READ, THE MORE INTERESTED HE BECAME, EVEN GOING SO FAR AS SUGGESTING THE PHENOMENON HAD SOME RELATION TO FEELINGS OF DEJA VU WHEN THE SIGNAL BEING RECEIVED WAS THOUGHT-BASED.

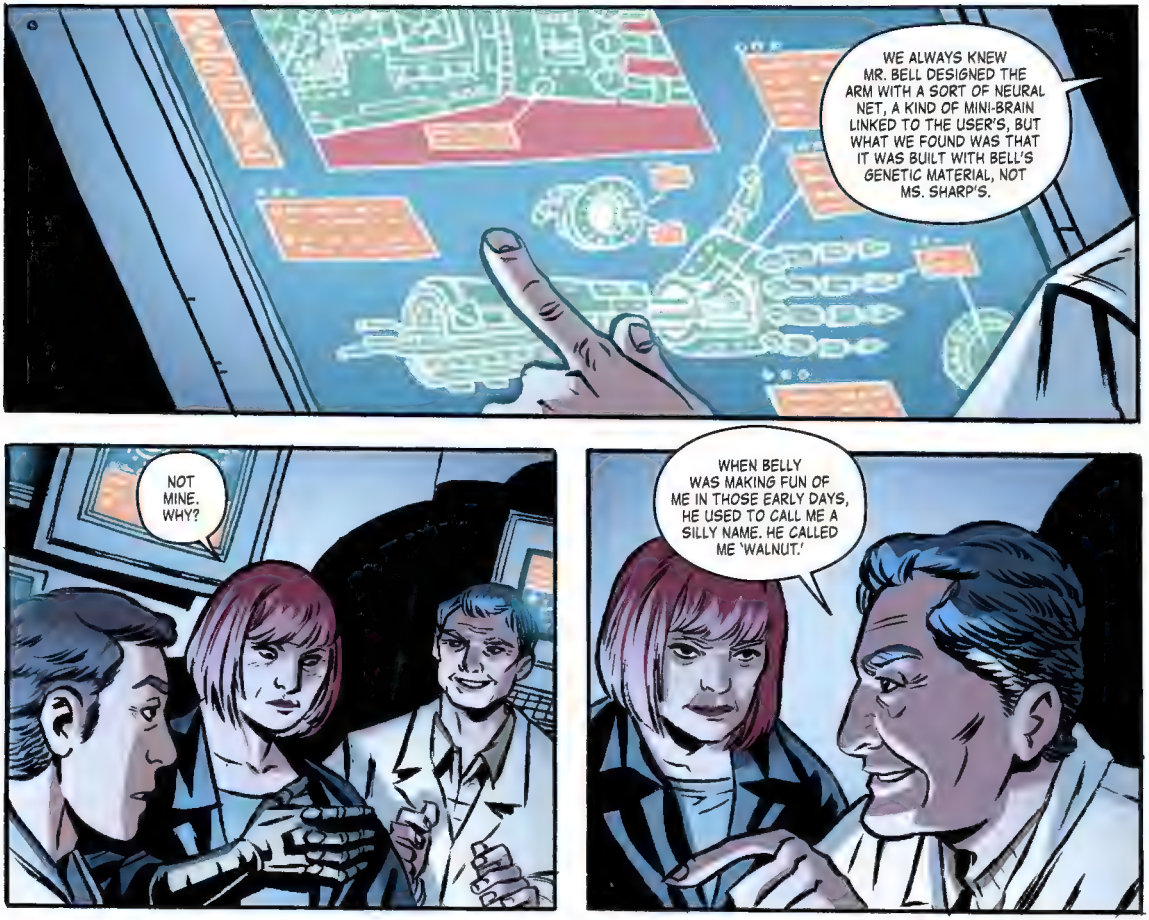
I HAD ALREADY THOUGHT OF IT, OF COURSE, BUT I WAS GLAD TO HAVE A BREAK FROM THE TERRIBLE JOKES, AND WITH HIS MIND ON THE MATTER THE TEST RESULTS ACTUALLY IMPROVED.

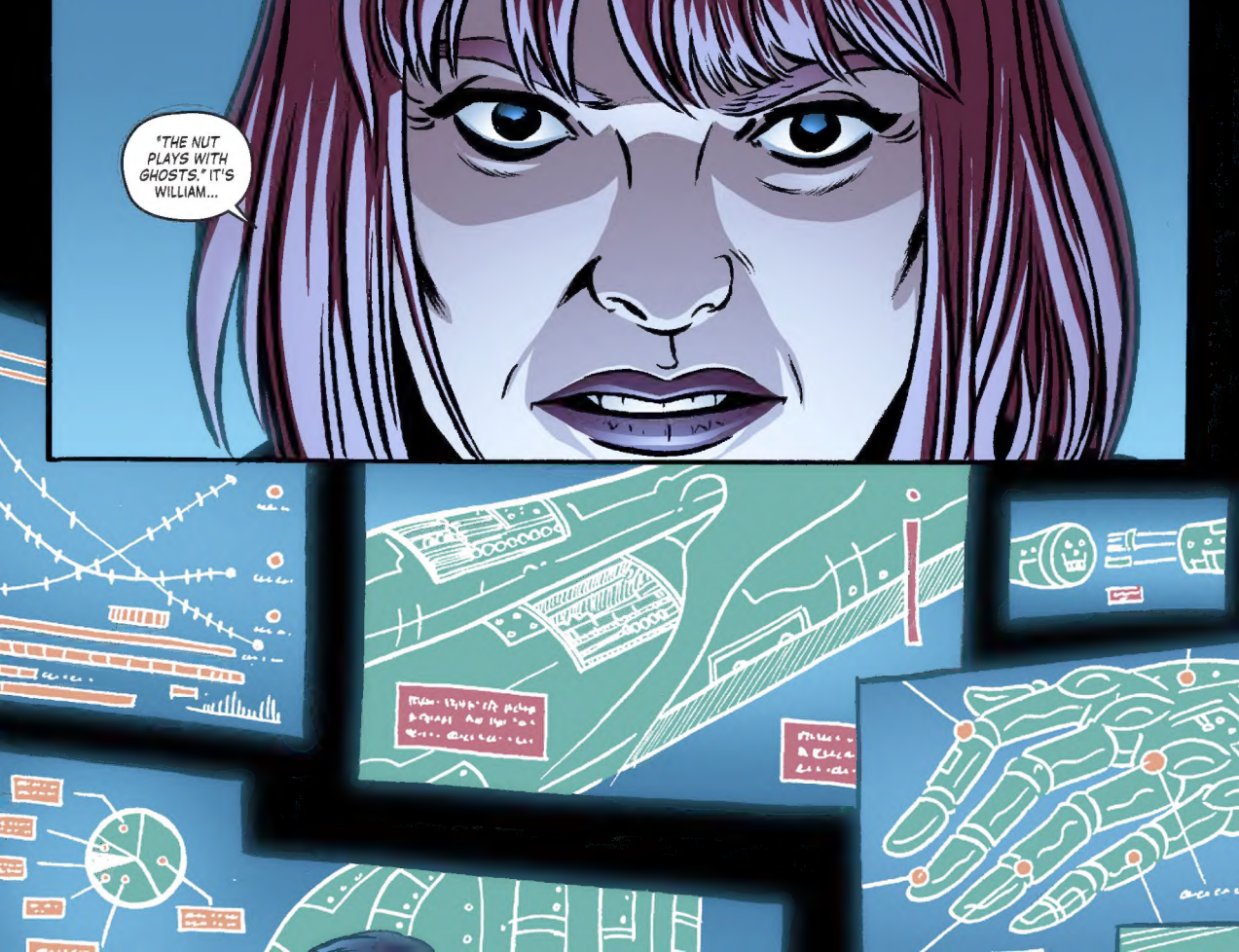
THE ONLY TROUBLE WAS THAT THE RESULTS WERE SO SPORADIC, AND SEEMINGLY DISCONNECTED FROM ANY PREDICTABLE TIMEFRAME. I EVENTUALLY MOVED ON TO OTHER THINGS.

INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, THOUGH WE HAD MOVED ON, NEW TEST RESULTS WOULD OCCASIONALLY STILL MANIFEST, SOMETIMES EVEN DECADES LATER.

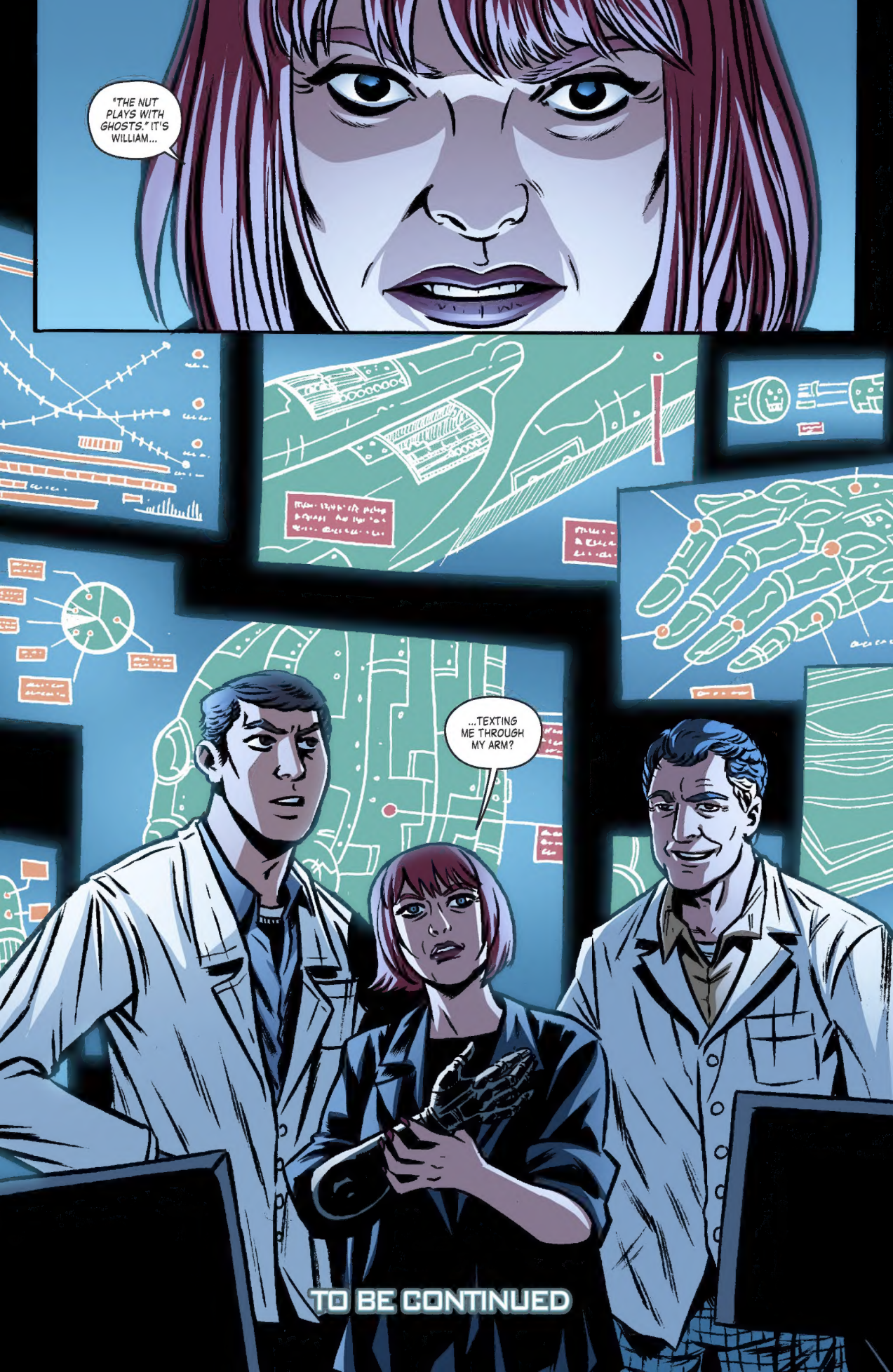
ONE TIME, WHILE IN A MEN'S ROOM, BELLY'S HANDS SPONTANEOUSLY ACTED AS THOUGH THEY WERE PLAYING THE PIANO, A VERY LIVELY SONG HE PLAYED DURING OUR TESTS.

LIKE I TOLD MS. SHARP, EVERYTHING SEEMS FINE, BUT SOMETHING YOU SAID DID MAKE ME TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT ONE DETAIL.


WE ALWAYS KNEW MR. BELL DESIGNED THE ARM WITH A SORT OF NEURAL NET, A KIND OF MINI-BRAIN LINKED TO THE USER'S, BUT WHAT WE FOUND WAS THAT IT WAS BUILT WITH BELL'S GENETIC MATERIAL, NOT MS. SHARP'S.
NOT MINE. WHY?
WHEN BELLY WAS MAKING FUN OF ME IN THOSE EARLY DAYS, HE USED TO CALL ME A SILLY NAME. HE CALLED ME 'WALNUT.'


"THE NUT PLAYS WITH GHOSTS." IT'S WILLIAM...

...TEXTING ME THROUGH MY ARM?
TO BE CONTINUED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...TEXTING ME THROUGH MY ARM?
TO BE CONTINUED

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